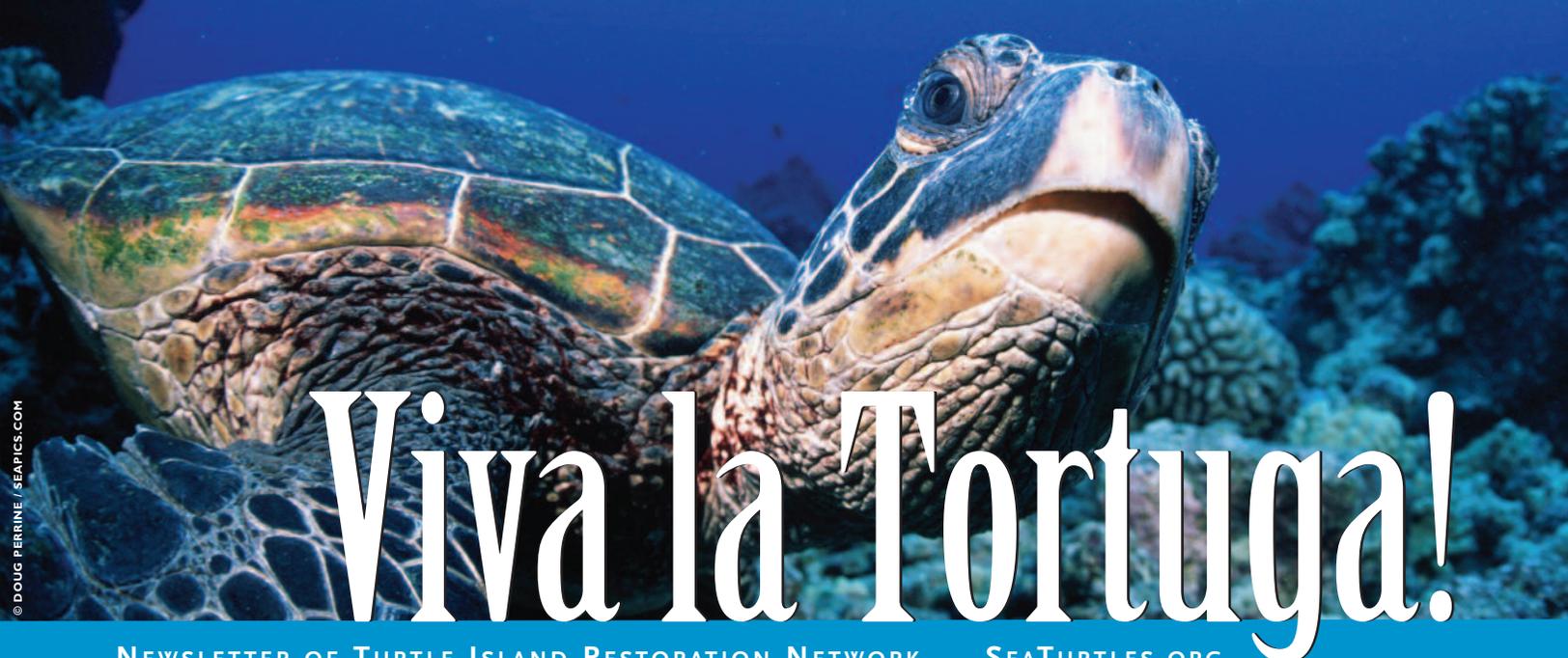


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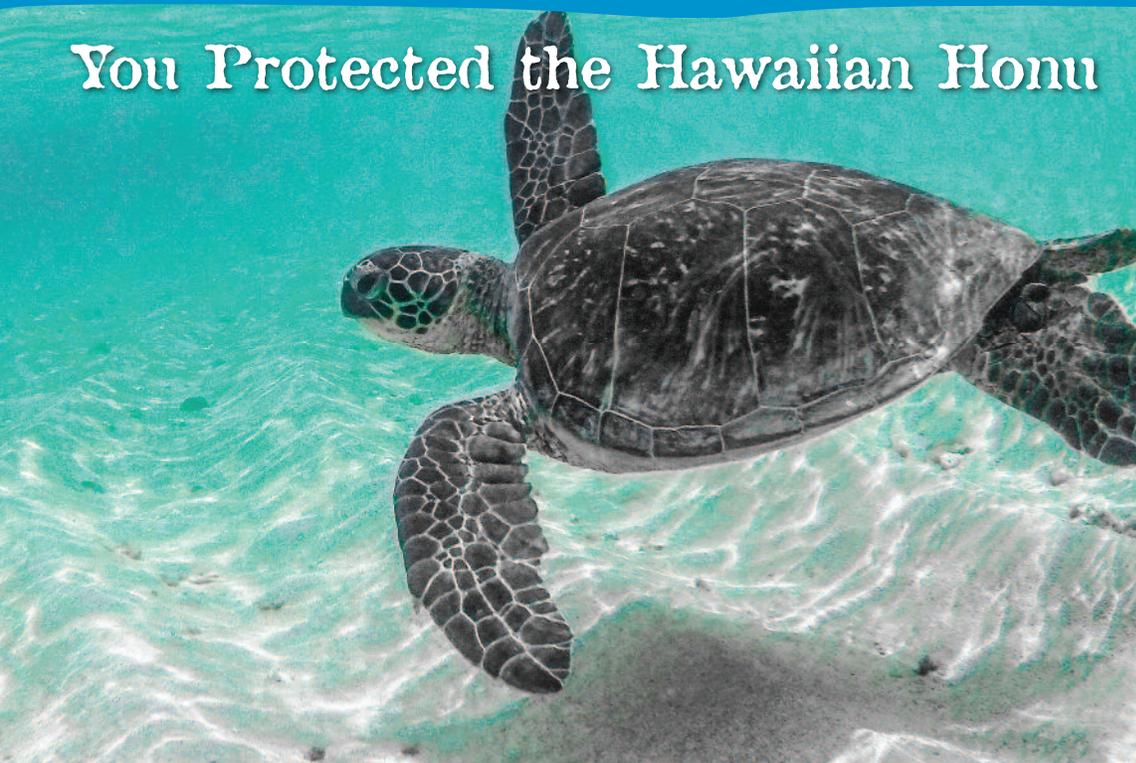


# Viva la Tortuga!

NEWSLETTER OF TURTLE ISLAND RESTORATION NETWORK

SEATURTLES.ORG

## You Protected the Hawaiian Honu



**I**N RESPONSE TO A CONTROVERSIAL petition to remove Hawaiian green sea turtles (known in Hawaiian as *honu*) from the Endangered Species Act (ESA), Turtle Island Restoration Network mobilized our members to tell the National Marine Fisheries Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to keep protections in place for these turtles. The outpouring of support was overwhelming with nearly 140,000 people signing on to our counter petition calling on the agencies to maintain *honu*' status as "threatened" under the ESA.

Thanks to members like you, this spring, Turtle Island won a major victory for *honu* when the agencies announced their decision to side with us, and reject the anti-sea-turtle petition. The original controversial 2012 petition to delist *honu* was filed under the name of the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs, which was allegedly created by the pro-fishing organization Western Pacific Fisheries Management Council. Thankfully, the agencies sided with Turtle Island and announced publicly that they did "*not find delisting warranted.*"

*continued on page 2*

### Green Sea Turtles (*Chelonia Mydas*)

Adult green turtles have a carapace (top shell) varying in color from black to gray to greenish or brown, often with bold streaks or spots, and a yellowish white plastron. Each sea turtle has distinctive individual facial markings, similar to fingerprints. They have an average weight of 300 pounds and grow to a length of three feet. Green sea turtles are the most widespread species of sea turtle, residing near 139 countries in the tropics and subtropics.

Major threats to the survival of the green sea turtle include:

- ❖ drownings of sea turtles in shrimp nets, tuna and swordfish longlines and other fishing gear;
- ❖ development and destruction of nesting beaches by humans;
- ❖ poaching of adult turtles for meat, shells, eggs and leather; and
- ❖ ocean pollution.

Learn more about these fascinating creatures and download a factsheet at [seaturtles.org/greenfacts](http://seaturtles.org/greenfacts).



RON WOOTEN

# Letter from the Director

## SMALL TURTLE, BIG PROBLEMS.



ONE OF THE MOST FASCINATING and also one of the most endangered sea turtles in the world is the Kemp's ridley. This ancient species is the only turtle that nests in mass during daylight hours, primarily on Mexico's Gulf Coast. Yet it spends most of its life in the coastal waters of the U.S. Gulf and Eastern Seaboard, feeding on crabs and shrimp as it migrates, storing up the nourishment it needs for its annual re-migration back to the southern Gulf to nest.

The species was brought back from the brink of extinction in the 1980s through the collective efforts of United States and Mexican governments and activists through the creation and enforcement of policies that outlawed the killing of adults and the harvest of their eggs, and by reducing the drowning of turtles in shrimp nets. Thanks to these protections, 30 years later, the species was well on its way to recovery.

Then came the devastating BP oil spill five years ago. Since then, the population of endangered Kemp's ridley sea turtles has been on the decline. The situation became even more severe when a record-breaking mass stranding occurred in 2014, stranding more than 1,300 cold-stunned turtles along the Eastern seaboard.

Without the use of TEDs, it is likely that more than 60,000 sea turtles of various species would drown every year in U.S. waters (the majority in the Gulf of Mexico). Today, most turtles that drown in Louisiana waters are washed up on the Texas coast due to currents. Sadly, one is more likely to encounter a dead turtle than see the magnificent animals repeat their nesting ritual.

Now more than ever, these small sea turtles need U.S. and international support to get back on the path of recovery. Louisiana should follow Mexico's lead in increasing protection for sea turtles.

It is time for Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal to take a lesson from Mexico, Texas and the other U.S. Gulf states and begin to enforce TED laws and create a no-shrimping, marine protected area in Louisiana waters.

The fate of the Kemp's ridley at this critical juncture may determine one of Jindal's most important environmental legacies as the American public considers his viability as a contender in the 2016 presidential race. To read an op-ed I recently co-authored with Mexico's most prominent conservationist, Homero Aridjis, on this issue, visit [SeaTurtles.org/homeroaridjis](http://SeaTurtles.org/homeroaridjis)

Viva La Tortuga!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Todd Ste".

TODD STEINER, Executive Director  
Turtle Island Restoration Network

*continued from page 1*

In their review, the agencies found that vulnerable Hawaiian green sea turtles need to be protected from the threats of climate change and sea-level rise, which could potentially impact their low-lying nesting beaches. They also found that the *honu* needs to be protected from other threats ranging from development to industrial fishing. Specifically, the agencies cited drift gillnets and longlines as major threats to green sea turtles, which are often caught as bycatch.

The Federal government looked at the green sea turtle populations globally and classified them into 11 separate Distinct Population Segments. They found all populations to be either "threatened" or "endangered" under the ESA. The Hawaiian *honu*s remain listed as "threatened" and there is no change to their protection status thanks to Turtle Island and our members' efforts to ensure sea turtle protections remain in place.

"We are pleased to see that *Honus* remain, rightly, listed as 'threatened' under the Endangered Species Act," said Todd Steiner, executive director of Turtle Island Restoration Network. "Now, we need to ensure that they are adequately protected from deadly longline hooks and mega drift gillnets that trap, entangle and drown them."



*A Hawaiian Green Sea Turtle, known as a Honu, basks in the sun on a Hawaiian beach.*



*Sargassum is a life source for endangered Kemp's ridley sea turtle hatchlings.*

# Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle Wildlife Fact Card

(*Lepidochelys Kempii*)

## APPEARANCE:

- ❖ The Kemp's Ridley is the smallest of all sea turtles.
- ❖ The shell ranges in color from olive to gray-green and is heart shaped.
- ❖ Weight: 90 lbs. Length: 2ft.

DIET: Crabs, shrimp, and fish.

## HABITAT:

- ❖ Coastal areas, bays, and lagoons.
- ❖ Mostly found in the Gulf of Mexico, but they can be found migrating up and down the Atlantic Coast.

## NESTING:

- ❖ Females only nest in the Gulf of Mexico.
- ❖ Only sea turtle that consistently nests during the day.
- ❖ Sexual maturity reached from 11-35 year.
- ❖ They nest in mass. The females all wait in the waters along the beach and, on some unknown cue, emerge from the sea all at once in what is known as an arribada or arrival in Spanish.

Visit [seaturtles.org/education](http://seaturtles.org/education) to view useful resources like these fact cards, and find fun science and nature-based learning activities for all ages.



RON WOOTEN

## Sargassum Symposium

**S**ARGASSUM IS A TYPE OF SEAWEED found in the Sargasso Sea, for which it is named, in the North Atlantic Ocean. Large mats of sargassum often break off, and with the help of ocean currents, drift to the Gulf of Mexico. Here the sargassum decorates Texas beaches where it provides welcome habitat for hatchlings, but is often viewed as a nuisance by the tourism industry that wants to present visitors with clean, white, seaweed-free beaches.

This Spring, Texas A&M University Galveston, NASA Stennis Space Center, and the Galveston Parks Board hosted a two-day symposium on sargassum to open the dialogue and bring together diverse stakeholders. The symposium centered around understanding both the benefits and the issues that arise when sargassum makes landfall on Texas beaches.

## Beach Volunteers

The Texas state sea turtle, the Kemp's ridley, nests on Texas and Mexico beaches from April to mid-July. Female Kemp's ridleys reach sexual maturity around 10-12 years of age, and nest roughly every one to three years, laying one to three clutches of eggs each nesting season. Sadly, funding cuts to a state program to monitor their nesting season left the monitoring and protection of the world's smallest sea turtle in question on the Upper Texas Coast.

In response, Turtle Island's on-the-ground staff in our Sea Turtle Action Center in Galveston, Texas quickly mobilized and organized over 120 ded-

icated volunteers to patrol for sea turtles. Volunteers began walking beaches along the Upper Texas Coast on April 1 looking for nesting sea turtles, turtle tracks or evidence of nests in the dune.

Even if you are not part of the official volunteer team, all residents and visitors to the Texas coast can help look for nesting Kemp's ridley sea turtles and report any findings by calling 1-866-turtle5 (866-887-8535).



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## Golf Course Restoration Saves Coho Salmon Habitat

**E**ACH WINTER ALONG THE WEST COAST, an amazing natural phenomenon occurs as coho salmon make their arduous journey from the ocean to local freshwater streams to spawn. Located just 45 minutes north of San Francisco in the wooded Lagunitas Creek Watershed in western Marin County, endangered, wild, Central California Coastal coho salmon swim upstream, jumping waterfalls along the way, as they seek their natal tributaries where they were born. Once home, the salmon spawn to regenerate their species, and then die. The nutrients in their bodies nourish the creek and surrounding redwood forest ecosystem.

*Coho salmon make their journey from the ocean to freshwater streams to spawn.*



The Lagunitas Creek Watershed supports the largest remaining run of endangered coho salmon, yet sadly this watershed has been degraded by development and human disturbance, which increases erosion in the streams and changes the natural landscape.

Turtle Island's Salmon Protection And Watershed Network (SPAWN) program works to restore this degraded habitat in order to save coho salmon, a keystone species, from extinction. One of SPAWN's recent projects is restoring

Larson Creek, which runs through the San Geronimo Golf Course. SPAWN has restored over 25,000 square feet of riparian habitat, including 735 feet of streamside degradation. We added six large woody debris structures, logs and sticks, that provide essential shaded habitat for juvenile coho salmon. SPAWN also planted over 850 plants that were grown locally in our Native Plant Nursery. These plants will aid in erosion control, and reduce invasive plant takeover that can change the entire landscape.

### Sea Turtle T-Shirt \$25

These 100% organic cotton t-shirts are made in the U.S.  
Black with white tribal turtle design  
Available in Men's and Women's sizes S, M, L and XL  
(women's sizes run small).

\$25 (please add \$3 for shipping):

Order online on our secure server at [SeaTurtles.org/Shop](http://SeaTurtles.org/Shop), call us during business hours at 1-800-859-7283 or send a check to:  
Turtle Island, PO Box 370,  
Forest Knolls, CA 94933



## Gina's Journey

**W**HETHER SAID TURTLES were slow clearly never met Gina the green sea turtle.

Between February 1 and February 22, Gina, a juvenile sea turtle originally captured in Cocos Island Marine National Park in 2011 by a team of Turtle Island and PRETOMA researchers, traveled 310 miles—or roughly 15 miles per day—to seek refuge in the Golfo Dulce on the mainland of Costa Rica.

But Gina's destination was even more important than her journey. Gina is the first sea turtle to be detected in both Cocos Island and Golfo Dulce, establishing biological connectivity between

these two marine habitats.

Although other endangered green turtles in Cocos Island National Park have been tracked migrating towards the coast of Central America before, Gina is the first to be detected in the feeding grounds of Golfo Dulce. This finding, scientists say, has implications for marine conservation policy.

**“Our mission is to use this scientific data to understand sea turtles’ migratory routes and then advocate for protected swimways to ensure these endangered species are not victims of industrial fishing practices like longlining,”** said Todd Steiner, executive director of Turtle Island.



Join Turtle Island's upcoming scuba diving research expedition to Cocos Island, Costa Rica as a citizen scientist and be a part of the team making groundbreaking discoveries that will lead to the creation of protected underwater superhighways for turtles and other marine wildlife. Visit [SeaTurtles.org/expeditions](http://SeaTurtles.org/expeditions) to learn more.

## “Don't Fly Fins” Campaign Takes Off—American Airlines Announces They Will No Longer Ship Shark Fins

**I**N EARLY APRIL, American Airlines announced via Twitter that they will no longer ship shark fins on any of their flights, including US Airways flights.

The change, according to a tweet from the world's largest airline group, went into effect on March 4th.

The announcement comes after Turtle Island Restoration Network and PRETOMA found evidence that American Airlines planes were exporting scalloped hammerhead shark fins from Costa Rica on planes destined for Hong Kong by way of stops on U.S. soil. This is illegal under the Endangered Species Act.

With this evidence in hand, Turtle Island began negotiations with American Airlines to convince the carrier to ban shark fin shipments on their planes.

“To see American Airlines, a major U.S. airline with extensive influence, pub-



licly acknowledge that they are no longer going to be shipping shark fins is incredible,” said Joanna Nasar, communication manager for Turtle Island Restoration Network. “It is what we have been working towards for months, and I applaud them for doing the right thing and hope it will inspire other carriers to take action.”

Turtle Island and PRETOMA also found evidence that other airline carri-

ers and shipping companies are shipping shark fins.

In China and many parts of Asia shark fins are considered a delicacy, fetching prices up to \$400 per kilogram; though banned in many parts of the world, global trade is still valued at over \$1 billion and an estimated 73 million sharks are killed annually, mainly for their fins. Take action at [SeaTurtles.org/nofinsonboard](http://SeaTurtles.org/nofinsonboard).

# Shop at the Sea Turtle Store

## Hammerhead Shark & Whale Shark Pendants \$21

Approximately 2" long and made of genuine lead-free pewter. Comes on an 18" braided black vinyl cord.

\$21 each (includes shipping):

Order online on our secure server at [SeaTurtles.org/Shop](http://SeaTurtles.org/Shop)

Call us during business hours at 1-800-859-7283

Send a check to Turtle Island, PO Box 370, Forest Knolls, CA 94933.



## Adopt a Nest of Sea Turtle Hatchlings

### Adopt-a-Nest Package Includes:

- Personalized adoption certificate
- Sea turtle window decal
- Sea turtle fact sheets
- *Viva La Tortuga!* newsletter
- Optional Antique Brass Pendant or Felted Wool Hatchling

**Regular Nest—\$45**

**Special Nest with Antique Brass Pendant—\$60**

**Special Nest with Felted Wool Hatchling—\$75**

When you order online, you can download a gift certificate immediately to give to your loved one so they know their Adopt-a-Nest package is on the way. Order online at [SeaTurtles.org/Adopt](http://SeaTurtles.org/Adopt).



## Leave a Legacy for the Sea Turtles

**T**HROUGH A BEQUEST to Turtle Island Restoration Network in your will and other estate plans, you can leave a legacy for sea turtles, sharks, salmon and the oceans.

Visit [SeaTurtles.org/BequestGift](http://SeaTurtles.org/BequestGift) or contact us at [info@SeaTurtles.org](mailto:info@SeaTurtles.org) or 1-800-859-7283 for information on including a bequest to Turtle Island in your will, adding a simple codicil to your existing will, and other ways to give through your estate. Any information discussed is confidential.

A professional financial advisor may be able to help you identify additional ways to provide you with tax benefits, as well as help protect the earth's oceans and wildlife. Thank you for considering this important way to give.

## Join Turtle Island's Monthly Giving Program

**H**ELP US TAKE SWIFT, sustained and innovative action by participating in our Monthly Giving Program. By making a monthly recurring donation to Turtle Island Restoration Network you can make a huge impact with a small monthly donation! Choose a species or program to support, or let us use your tax-deductible contribution where it is needed most.

Donate just \$5 a month or more and we will thank you with a Turtle Island baseball cap made from 100% organic cotton.

You can cancel or change the amount of your donation anytime. Use the enclosed envelope to join, or go online to [SeaTurtles.org/Monthly](http://SeaTurtles.org/Monthly).



## Board Member Spotlight: Julie Hanft

**T**URTLE ISLAND recently welcomed Julie Owen Hanft to our board of directors. Julie brings expertise in two areas that are both critical to protecting endangered marine wildlife and their habitats. Through her current career in environmental education, Julie brings essential skills to help craft Turtle Island programs that prepare young people as future stewards to protect sea turtles, dolphins and other species. Julie is currently an enthusiastic educator of elementary and middle school students at the Waldorf-inspired Greenwood School in Mill Valley, CA. Additionally, she founded Marin GreenPlay, a nature awareness summer camp, as well as the Marin Open Garden Project.

Julie is also a practicing attorney, and has worked as a federal law clerk and commercial litigator. Her legal background informs her work to help support and develop Turtle Island's advocacy and legal action program. Julie holds degrees from Barnard College and the University of Miami Law School as well as certificates in Natural History, Environmental Science and Sustainable Practices, and she completed the Environmental Forum of Marin. She also became a Certified California Naturalist through Turtle Island's program offered in partnership with the University of California. We are very pleased to welcome Julie Owen Hanft onto our board and look forward to engaging her wide range of skills to help protect oceans and wildlife!

## Meet the Interns

**T**URTLE ISLAND RESTORATION NETWORK is proud to help train the next generation of environmentalists through our internship program. Get to know our interns!



*Left to Right: Michael Rhodes, Shawna Kelly, Aimee Polekoff, Yani Pohl*

**SHAWNA KELLY, Fundraising and Habitat Restoration Intern**—B.S. Wildlife, Fish and Conservation Biology, UC Davis

**YANI POHL, Fundraising and Habitat Restoration Intern**—B.S. Ecology and Evolutionary Science, UC Santa Cruz

**MICHAEL RHODES, Smolt Monitoring Intern**—B.S. Environmental Studies, University of Pittsburgh

**AIMEE POLEKOFF, Education and Outreach Intern**—B.A. Geoscience, Franklin and Marshall College

**ZEPHYR SYLVESTER, Smolt Monitoring Intern**—B.S. Environmental Studies, Whitman College

**ANNIE HINES, Habitat Restoration Intern**—B.A. Spanish Language and Literature, Loyola Marymount University

**GLORIA DICKIE, Environmental Communications Intern**—B.A. Media, Technology and Geography, University of Western Ontario. Pursuing M.A. in Journalism, University of Colorado, Boulder.

FIND INTERNSHIPS AT [SEATURTLES.ORG/INTERN](http://SEATURTLES.ORG/INTERN)

## Donor Spotlight: Doug Perrine

**D**OUG PERRINE IS A RENOWNED wildlife photographer, a marine biologist, and a generous Turtle Island Restoration Network member and donor. Over the past 20 years, Doug has provided the use of dozens of his photos of sea turtles, dolphins, whales and other marine wildlife. "Photographs of marine animals are one of the best ways to help people to care for these species," he says.



Though educated as a fisheries biologist at the University of Miami, Doug decided to focus on wildlife photography. His award-winning photos, published in nearly every major nature media outlet, are available through Seapics.com, which he founded. Turtle Island extends sincere thanks to Doug Perrine for his generous contributions to our successful campaigns.

Turtle Island Restoration Network  
P.O. Box 370  
Forest Knolls, CA 94933



## About the Sea Turtle Restoration Project

### A Conservation Initiative of Turtle Island Restoration Network

**T**HE SEA TURTLE RESTORATION PROJECT was founded more than 25 years ago, and is a conservation initiative of Turtle Island, a leading advocate for the world's oceans and marine wildlife.

Our work is based on science, fueled by people who care, and effective at catalyzing long-lasting positive change that protects the likes of green sea turtles and steelhead trout.

Our mission is to mobilize people in local communities around the world to protect marine wildlife and the oceans and inland watersheds that sustain them.

We accomplish our mission through grassroots empowerment, consumer action, strategic litigation hands-on restoration, environmental education, and by promoting sustainable local, national and international marine policies. Learn more at [SeaTurtles.org](http://SeaTurtles.org).

### in this issue:

**Happy Hawaiian Honus**

**Follow Sea Turtle Gina's Travels**

**Fly Fin Free**

**Beach Patrols Start  
in the Gulf of Mexico**

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## Viva la Tortuga!

Issue No. 1, 2015

Newsletter of Turtle Island Restoration Network



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